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RESEARCH

Socially Included or Excluded? The Role of Social Capital among Filipino Labour Migrants

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This article focuses on how social capital is mobilisable and usable for Filipino labour migrants in their efforts to become part of the Finnish labour market. Drawing on the argument of Anthias that not all kinds of resources enable social capital, this article also reveals the dominant role of the minority church as a provider of support simultaneously confining its members' inclusion to the destination society. The article demonstrates how mobilisation of social capital is possible only in certain socioeconomic context, for example, when social ties transfer usable resources for the actors, such as information and access to a new job, whereas in other cases, the social ties chiefly provide non-mobilisable resources, such as emotional support and solidarity. However, these resources can be of advantage for strengthening the ethnic identity of migrants.

Keywords: Social capital; Social ties; Mobilisable; Filipino labour migrants; Inclusion

1 Introduction

Social capital can be both a profit and a constraint for new arrivals in their inclusion to their destination country and its society. While settling, migrants often rely on their networks, which consist of both their formal and informal ties, in their efforts to gain access to the labour market and society of the destination country (Gurak & Caces 1992; Reyneri & Fullin 2011). Scholars have reflected on the positive and negative sides of social capital, particularly regarding the use of social ties and networks (Anthias 2007; Ryan 2011, 2016). Hence, not all kinds of networks and social ties deliver beneficial social capital (Bourdieu 1986). In some cases, strong ties in actors' networks hinder them from achieving new and beneficial opportunities that improve their occupational or social position (Ahmad 2005; Kelly & Lusi 2006).

The objectives of this article are twofold. First, the intention is to determine how social capital becomes a useful resource for Filipino migrants in their efforts to become part of the Finnish labour market and society during their early settling stage by exploring the creation, structure, and composition of their social ties and networks. Hence, the notion of social ties and networks as providers of social capital should not be taken for granted. In line with Ryan

(2011), I stress how attention should be given to diverse types of social ties and to the socio-economic context where these ties take place. Second, the aim is to study how social ties can either enable or disable access to resources such as information, solidarity, and emotional support created in social and religious settings. Drawing on the argument of Anthias (2007) that not all kinds of resources enable social capital, this article also reveals the dominant role of the minority church as a provider of support simultaneously confining its members' inclusion to the destination society.

The article draws on elaboration of the use and mobilisability of social capital by Anthias (2007), and is influenced by the work of Bourdieu (1986). By studying how social ties are bonded and bridged, I elucidate migrants' utilisation of resources and their transformation to social capital. The dichotomous use of bonding and bridging, however, has received some criticism. Ryan (2016) acknowledges the need to differentiate between the strength (strong or weak), direction (vertical or horizontal), and content (social distance) of social ties. These kinds of distinctions are also of relevance in this article. I demonstrate how the mobilisation of social capital is possible only in certain socioeconomic contexts, for example when social ties transfer usable resources, such as information and access to a new job and to actors, whereas in other cases, the social ties chiefly provide non-mobilisable resources, such as emotional support and solidarity. However, these resources can be advantageous for strengthening the ethnic identity of migrants.

After a short introduction to Filipino migration from South to North, this article continues by exploring the utilisation of social capital and social resources in migration studies followed by a presentation of the respondents and methods used. It then illustrates the use of social capital among newly arrived migrants in the form of vignettes. This is followed by an exploration of the advantages or disadvantages of different types of social ties and social resources and the significance of transnational ties for the respondents. The final chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of vertical and horizontal ties as well as the possible transferability of social resources to a useful form of social capital. This article contributes to the literature of social capital and ties among labour migrants (Kelly & Lusis 2006; Patulny 2015; Ryan 2011).

2 Filipino Labour Migration within the Finnish Context

A significant reason for contemporary overseas migration from the Philippines is high unemployment and underemployment. Both forms of negative employment can be seen as a consequence of neo-liberal globalisation in the Philippines. In the 1970s, the International Monetary Fund launched several structural adjustment policies in the country, which in turn led to unemployment (Lindio-McGovern 2012). At the end of September 2016, the estimated number of Filipino labour migrants, or Overseas Filipino Workers, was 2.2 million (Philippine Statistics Authority 2016). Remittances sent home by labour migrants have become an important national resource for the country. In 2015, the Philippines was the third largest remittance-receiving country, with its remittances amounting to \$29.7 billion (World Bank 2016).

The migration of Filipinos to Finland started in the 1970s in the form of marriage migration. At the beginning of 2018, the number of Filipino migrants in Finland was 4,344, of which 1,477 were male and 2,867 female (Statistics Finland 2019). Finnish recruitment companies have started to recruit foreigners due to the ageing working population and a lack of labour in certain sectors, such as construction, healthcare, and restaurants. Long-distance recruitment of Filipino nurses started in 2008 and was followed by the recruitment of practical nurses and cooks (Näre 2012). In addition to these occupational groups, direct recruitment of domestic workers and cleaners has become popular among previous 'expat' families and Filipino private entrepreneurs in Finland. Since 2008, recruitment agencies have recruited Filipinos

to work in the healthcare and restaurant sectors in Finland (Näre 2012; Vartiainen 2018). According to the informants, private families and smaller Finnish-Filipino recruitment agencies have also started to directly recruit domestic workers and cleaners from the Philippines. The role of Filipino migrants as transnational care workers as well as their recruitment to Finland has been thoroughly discussed (Cleland Silva 2018; Näre 2012; Vaittinen, Hoppania & Karsio 2018; Vartiainen et al. 2016). This article aims to deepen the topic by providing an exploration of Filipino labour migrants' use of their social ties and networks in their efforts to become included in the Finnish labour market and society.

3 Exploring the Usefulness of Social Capital for Migrant Communities

3.1 *Social capital and migrant networks*

Before looking at the use of social resources among Filipino migrants, I contextualise my study through social capital and migrant networks. Social capital, which was originally introduced by Pierre Bourdieu and later elaborated by James Coleman (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993: 1321), has become a popular, albeit disputed, concept among social scientists. Bourdieu defines social capital as '[t]he sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition' (Bourdieu, cited in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: 119). Coleman emphasises the facilitating dimension of social capital that enables actors to achieve their interests through their social networks. According to him, actors are dependent on their social surroundings and social context in which '[p]ersons' actions are shaped, redirected, constrained by the social context; norms, interpersonal trust, social networks, and social organization' (Coleman 1988: S96).

Putnam, in turn, has distinguished the bonding and bridging dimension of social capital that is mobilised and shaped within social networks. For Putnam, bonding social capital refers to 'ties to people who are like me in some important way', whereas bridging social capital is defined as 'people who are unlike me in some important way' (Putnam 2000: 23). The notion of bonding and bridging social capital is also significant in studies of migrants' inclusion in their destination society. It enables us to understand how bonding social capital can enable a sense of belonging and help migrants 'getting by' in their ethnic community (Katila & Wahlbeck 2012; Putnam 2000: 22–24). However, by dichotomising the use of ties into bonding and bridging, there is a risk of simplification. In her study of Polish migrants' access to the labour market in the UK, Ryan (2011: 720) stresses the need to differentiate 'between horizontal and vertical bridging by exploring the relationships, resources, and relative social location of the actors involved'. Some social ties can be of particular importance as door openers to the new society during migrants' early stay in their destination, whereas other ties can deceive or become stronger depending on the migrants' life course. The advantage of social ties depends on migrants' ability to benefit from the relative use of the social distance between them and their social relations (Bourdieu 1986; Ryan 2011). For example, migrants' daily connection with their native colleagues at the working place does not necessarily provide any beneficial use in cases where this does not involve an exchange of information advancing migrants' socioeconomic position.

Subsequently, Anthias (2007) states that it is crucial to pay attention to how social capital is usable and mobilisable in the migrants' settlement process in the destination country, i.e. whether and how economic, social, or other kinds of resources are convertible into useful forms of capital that foster improvement. As Anthias (2007: 793–794) indicates, it is important to make a distinction between resources, such as ties, networks, or other forms of social resources, to show how these are mobilisable. In other words, it is not enough for actors to possess a certain resource if they cannot utilise or mobilise it in a purposeful manner. For

example, owning a car is useful only if you have the knowledge and opportunity to drive it. According to her, social resources can become useful if these are mobilisable in one of the following ways: first, as a so-called 'positively advantaged social capital', i.e. if social ties and/or networks are used in a hierarchical structure for increasing advantage, e.g. gaining a better salary or promotion at a working place; whereas, the second form implies 'negatively advantaged social capital', where social capital is mobilisable through defensive and usurpatory orientation, referring to actors' disadvantageous position where they have to defend themselves in order to survive (Anthias 2007: 794).

Scholars have also shown how strong and dense networks may be supportive as they promote the sharing of mutual trust and obligations between their members, but at the same time, they can fail to provide access to new opportunities in the society (Tilly 2007). Particularly, ethnic bonded networks are not always profitable for migrants (Anthias & Cederberg 2009). At worst, these networks can create closure or segregation from the destination society (Nannestad, Svendsen & Svendsen 2008). The exclusionary effect of social capital is important, as is the question of whether and how resources are beneficial for migrants in accessing Finnish society and its labour market.

3.2 Social resources and their supportive dimension

To obtain a more encompassing picture of Filipino migrants' opportunities to become part of the Finnish labour market and society, it is crucial to examine the supportive dimension of social resources. This entails an exploration of the function and use of social resources, particularly the way in which they enable or disable different kinds of support for migrants. Social support is a multidimensional concept that consists of three features, namely, support network resources, subjective appraisals of support, and supportive behaviour (Vaux 1998). Social networks in this article refer to the migrants' family and friends who provide support through hard times (Granovetter 1973, 1983). However, my intention is not to explore the components of the migrants' network but to focus on their supportive function. The second key element, subjective appraisal, describes Filipino labour migrants' way of providing peer support. The third core feature consists of supportive behaviour, which comprises six categories: feedback, emotional support, practical support, guidance and advice, financial support, and socialising (Vaux 1998: 29).

It is also important to take into account the spatial and temporal dimension of migrants' resources. As previous scholars have shown, migrant networks are based on an interplay of local and transnational ties (Katila & Wahlbeck 2012; Ryan & Mulholland 2015). I also discuss the usefulness of transnational ties in the lives of Filipino labour migrants. In addition to financial support, transnational ties can take the form of emotional support between migrants and the family members they leave behind. This kind of support often involves forms of affective entailments and moral obligations (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding 2007; Boccagni 2014, 2015). Although not all kinds of resources turn into usable and mobilisable forms of social capital, some of them, such as affection, care, and solidarity, nevertheless, play a dominant role in migrants' transnational way of life. For example, the need of information and advice about social and juridical topics may be more urgent among newly arrived migrants than gaining long-term skills, such as learning Finnish. This can be explained by the length of time spent in the destination country and by the migrants' socioeconomic position.

The previously mentioned resources are based on trust networks consisting of actors from kinship groups, congregations, and the ethnic community. Trust networks play an important role in maintaining long-distance migration and sending remittances in the form of long-term obligations and solidarity (Tilly 2007). Tilly defines trust networks as 'ramified interpersonal connections, consisting mainly of strong ties, within which people set valued, consequential, long-term resources and enterprises at risk to the malfeasance, mistakes, or failures of others'

(Tilly 2007: 7). However, in this article, I prefer to use the concept of social networks, which also refers to the dimensions of trust and mutual obligations.

4 Data and Methods

The aim of the study was to explore Filipino labour migrants' access to work, working conditions in the capital area of Helsinki, and their transnational contacts back home. Data for this study were collected between April 2013 and December 2015. It consisted of participative observations, notes, and 28 semi-structured interviews conducted among 17 Filipino women and 11 men. Most of the informants were between 30 and 40 years old, consisting of 10 female domestic workers, five male cooks and one female cook, two female nurses, one female and one male practical nurse, and six male and two female cleaners. The educational background of the migrants was more or less the same as the occupational background of all the respondents, except for the domestic employees who had worked in another country as an au pair or a domestic worker before their arrival in Finland. All except two workers taking part in this study shared a need to improve the economic situation of their family members left behind by sending them regularly remittances.

I gained access to several of the participants of this study by using a snowball method and by participating in Filipino cultural and religious activities organised by the Catholic Church and by other minority parishes. The interviews focussed on motives for migration, social ties in the local and transnational contexts (both at work and in private life), access to work and housing, working conditions (working tasks, hours, and salary), remittances, amongst other things. In this article, the focus is on three Filipino migrant workers' experiences of access to work and civil society in Finland. The majority of the respondents stressed the important role of social ties created in congregations. However, the vignettes chosen for this article are based on a selection of migrant stories consisting of social ties strengthening their ethnic belonging in their Filipino religious communities and/or bridging for new occupational opportunities.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The analysis consisted of both a manual and a computer program-based data analysis (Atlas.ti) permitting a categorisation of the data into thematic topics and finding new emerging topics highlighting the migrants' creation and use of social capital. All respondents were guaranteed anonymity (i.e. all names in this article are pseudonyms). Furthermore, I have left out the names of the minority churches because of the small number of members. This was an important point, as some of the respondents had experienced injustice at their workplaces or during their recruitment process. The interviews lasted between 60 and 150 min.

5 Accessing Ethnic Ties and Social Resources

The following vignettes illuminate the use of social ties among Filipino labour migrants in their initial time in Finland and discuss how the migrants have become socially included in the destination society and found access to the labour market and their work environment. My intention is to show how social ties can function as valuable bridges between the newly arrived and other co-ethnic members as well as their native colleagues and/or employers.

Migrant scholars have shown how the church plays an important role for several newly arrived migrants as the source of solidarity, ethnic bonding and spirituality (Berger & Redding 2011; Frederiks 2016; Pasura 2012). The Catholic Church or other minority churches also provide significant social ties for ethnic and spiritual bonding for the Filipinos in Finland. For many migrants, participation in multi-ethnic worship opens a venue to new social ties beyond their own ethnic community (Pasura 2012). However, the respondents preferred to participate in worship organised by their co-ethnic members. The majority of the respondents were members mainly of three minority churches. These churches will remain unnamed in this article because of their small size, i.e. these churches consisted of 25–50 members each.

I have chosen to demonstrate the mobilisation of social capital among three respondents who actively used their religious social ties, namely, Arnel, Luna and Cecilia. Arnel's vignette illustrates unsuccessful mobilisation of social capital for socioeconomic purposes, but useful utilisation of social resources for ethnic and spiritual bonding because of his church's restrictive rules limiting its members' participation in the destination country. Luna's vignette shares similarities with Arnel's because of her membership in the same minority church as Arnel; however, Luna had created useful work-based relations outside her religious networks and managed to improve her career. Cecilia's case, on the other hand, shows how a transfer of social resources to social capital can be beneficial in migration and in access to working life.

5.1 Arnel: Being part of closed ethnic and religious networks

Arnel came to Finland through a Filipino recruitment agency. Before this, he had worked as a cook in Saudi Arabia. He had obtained some information about Finland from the Internet and from his cousin, who already worked there. For Arnel, the opportunity to regularly participate in the activities of his minority church in the metropolitan area of Helsinki was the core incentive for choosing Finland. He had built up his life according to the ideology of the church. According to Arnel, he would not have come to Finland if his church had not existed here. His most significant social relations consisted mainly of his co-ethnic members from his church who provided him with a support network—he could turn to the church members when he needed financial support or wanted to socialise in his own language in addition to spiritual bonding. However, his church ideology included several restrictions, for example, it forbade its members from belonging to trade unions or marrying non-members.

His other contacts, his workmates, were mainly Filipinos, who provided him with information on practical issues related to work and accommodation. At work, Arnel could also ask native Finnish speakers for practical help related to work tasks, but otherwise these contacts remained distant. In addition to his local contacts in Finland, Arnel was also frequently in touch with his parents and sister back home in the Philippines via weekly Skype calls. His family remained an important source of emotional support. Arnel also visited them every other year and regularly sent his parents remittances for the maintenance of their rice farm. His network consisted mostly of strong ethnic ties, such as his family members and members of his church. In the future, the church's strong obligations may cause Arnel to be excluded from the majority society. In the worst case, he may become segregated from his destination society.

5.2 Luna: Bonding and bridging between social networks

Luna used to work as a live-in domestic worker for a Finnish family in Singapore. The family was satisfied with her work and wanted her to join them when they moved back to Finland. After paperwork of 12 months, Luna obtained a work permit and was able to move with the family to Finland. In Finland, Luna continued to work as a live-in domestic worker. Over the years, the emotional bond between her and the family members consisting of two parents and their two daughters became stronger. After a while, her employer encouraged Luna to become an entrepreneur and recommended her to some of their friends. Although Luna was satisfied with the combination of work as a live-in domestic worker and as a domestic worker for three other families once a week, she decided later on to open her own cleaning company.

Luna's employer had helped Luna with practical bureaucratic issues such as paying taxes and accessing the Finnish social security system. Her employer was also the key actor in finding Filipino contacts for Luna. Her employer took her to a Catholic church known for organising a mass in the Filipino language. A Filipino friend of hers from the Catholic congregation guided her to her own minority church. She became an active member of this church and attended it at least twice a week. The church became an important support resource. With the members of the church, she could share thoughts in Filipino and exercise her faith. However,

Luna faced similar restrictions to Arnel's: she was expected to follow the directives of the church and to devote her faith to the church ideology. Her closest social ties consisted of members of the church and her mother and sister, who still lived in the Philippines. Luna spoke to them daily via Skype and tried to visit them every other year.

5.3 Cecilia: Strong and weak ties as door openers to the destination country

Cecilia is a domestic worker and comes from a small island in the Visayas. She had worked in Hong Kong as a live-in domestic worker, but had to quit due to poor working conditions, i.e. a lack of salary and freedom. Her Filipino friend managed to organise a job for her in Norway as an au pair. After the permitted maximum of two years as an au pair in Norway, Cecilia moved to Finland, where some of the members of her congregation worked as domestic workers. Cecilia had joined her minority church while she was working in Norway. She attended this minority church during her time in the Philippines, where her parents actively participated in the church. The members of minority church helped Cecilia to move from Norway to Finland and to find a new job and accommodation. In other words, her relation with the other members were based on socialisation in the same congregation of which some became close friends with her and others remained important sources of information and social support. Cecilia had mainly created contacts with members of her congregation. The congregation symbolised a family in which she could socialise and in which she could ask for guidance, but which also enabled her to strengthen her faith and obtain emotional support. Cecilia described her congregation as follows: 'I can find a family in the [religious] community. I find siblings, not through blood but through faith. Yeah, and I find friends. It helps us grow and sometimes also helps us survive in this country'.

At the time of the interview, Cecilia had worked in Finland for 18 months as a domestic worker. She worked for five different families in the Helsinki area. Her work tasks mostly consisted of cleaning and child care. She considered the regulations of her working permit as better in Finland, because domestic work is not restricted to a stay of two years maximum. Furthermore, as a domestic worker, she had access to the Finnish social security system, which was not the case for au pairs in Norway. For practical guidance, such as information regarding study opportunities or the social security system, Cecilia mainly trusted her Filipino work-mates and members from her congregation.

During her 18 months, Cecilia had also met a Finnish man with whom she had moved in. Her network in Finland consisted mainly of her boyfriend and his family and of her friends from her congregation. They provided her with the opportunity to socialise and share work experiences and emotions. In addition, Cecilia was regularly in contact with her parents and siblings in the Philippines. She tried to improve her family members' living conditions by sending them monthly remittances to cover school and healthcare costs. Sending and receiving of remittances was based on an unwritten reciprocity between Cecilia and her family members still in the Philippines. Cecilia sent monthly remittances to her parents who in turn exchanged news and expressed emotional support over mobile phone calls or virtual IT tools. During difficult times, Cecilia could always turn to her mother and share her thoughts via Skype. Cecilia had started to feel that she belonged to the Finnish society, partly because of her work and her boyfriend. She also still felt a strong sense of belonging to the Filipino community in Finland and beyond.

5.4 Cherry: Co-ethnic networks as a source of social capital

Cherry is a nurse in her mid-40s. Her core reason for working abroad was the opportunity to finance her son's studies. Before Cherry arrived in Finland, she had worked for more than 30 years in Bahrain as a senior nurse. She had also participated in a preliminary Finnish course in the Philippines for nine months. However, neither her language skills nor previous work

experience was accredited at her new workplace. Therefore, she had to take language lessons outside her working time. Thus, the hardest thing for her during the settlement period was becoming accepted by her Finnish colleagues and clients.

The most difficult part [in the beginning] was the people, because people were negative, that negative feeling. But they got used to us because Filipinos love to work and they love their jobs. We really care for our patients. So, they found we could work well with them.

Her social network mainly consisted of other Filipinos, either from work or from the Catholic congregation. Cherry took part in Sunday worship organised in Filipino if she was free from work. She, like the other participants of this study, preferred to take part in worship organised in Filipino, although there were also other religious services in English that would have provided socialisation with other ethnic groups. These contacts helped her to remain affiliated with the Filipino community and to stay up to date with news from the Philippines in addition to weekly news she received from her husband and her parents back home. Cherry felt that staying in touch with her family members back in the Philippines made it easier for her to manage her daily life.

Her occupational network included both workmates and other nurses who belonged to a Filipino association. After a year in Finland, Cherry had become a member of a trade union and a Filipino association. Both associations have provided her and her colleagues with important information regarding their work contracts, salary, and working rights in general. Furthermore, her workmates and other nurses who are members of the Filipino association have provided important emotional support and peer support. Cherry's quotation below describes the importance of peer support among the members of the Filipino nurses' association:

We meet in cafés like this and sometimes just talk and it's so, it's so helpful, because you can internalize and verbalize what you feel here, what happened to you last month. So, it's really helpful that you can tell somebody, 'oh this is what happened', and so it's really helpful to have these associations.

Cherry's social network provides her with a venue for her ethnic community, whereas her ties with the association and trade union help her make bridges with her working life. These work-based ties were useful for her occupational self-esteem and identity.

6 From Social Resource Utilisation to Social Capital Mobilisation

The usability of social capital as an efficient resource for gaining access to the labour market and society of the destination society depends on the function, content, and strength of the social ties and resources used by the migrants (Ryan 2016). In the following, an exploration of what has been described above illustrates how the mobilisation of social capital takes place only in certain social contexts that provide socioeconomic advantages for migrants. Social resources are also useful for strengthening the ethnic belonging of migrants.

6.1 Co-ethnic religious ties as a non-mobilisable form of social capital

Arnel's and Luna's cases are examples of lack of inclusion in the destination society as a consequence of enforceable trust relations with their church, which led to exclusion from the majority society. Some of the ties created between the respondents and other members of their church played a significant role as providers of supportive resources in the form of emotional attachment, solidarity, and spiritual bonding, amongst other things. These

supportive social ties represented support networks that were important for the migrants' mental well-being. The relationships between the migrants and their church members were based on strong ethnic bonding and focused on information sharing about the church and the Filipino transnational community. In other words, these kinds of supportive functions do not contribute to social capital mobilisable for the use of inclusion to the Finnish labour market and society, although such supportive resources are significant for migrants' well-being. As Anthias (2007: 793) claims: 'ties and networks that cannot be ... transferred effectively do not constitute social capital, although they may be resources in their own right'. From the point of view of the Arnel's church, social capital is mobilisable to the advantage for the church, but not necessarily to its members. Nevertheless, the ethnic and spiritual bonding that takes place between its members should not be underestimated even though they do not provide mobilisation of social capital for them. The rules of the church prohibited them for joining the trade union or marrying a member outside their religious community. These restrictive regulations can exclude its members from Finnish society despite the strong ethnic bonding that strengthens the members' co-ethnic belonging to the Filipino minority church.

6.2 Co-ethnic religious ties as a mobilisable form of social capital

All 28 respondents had social ties that were useful for strengthening their ethnic identity. These co-ethnic ties consisted of other migrants who shared the same socioeconomic position, but only those who provided beneficial resources for the socioeconomic advantage of the migrants functioning as mobilisable forms of social capital. These horizontal weak ties bridged useful resources, such as trust and information, that were crucial for those migrants who looked for accommodation and work upon arrival, as Cecilia's case showed. These were significant resources for a successful move from one Nordic country to another as well as for accessing the labour market in Finland. The social distances between the persons who provided the information were not the same as previously mentioned horizontal weak ties, for example Cecilia's cousin became a trusted person who provided social support and she was the gatekeeper for other members in the congregation who in turn provided valuable information about jobs and accommodation. However, over time, the social distance between the respondents and their social relations can change followed by new kinds of allocation of capital and/or social resources.

6.3 Horizontal bonding and bridging

Like Arnel and Luna, Cherry also had several strong ethnic ties, although these were not based on religious bonding. In Cherry's network, several of her co-ethnic ties were work based. She regularly took part in activities promoting her self-esteem, such as the events organised by the Filipino nurses' association. The members provided each other with important peer support by listening to each other's experiences at the hospital. This kind of supportive appraisal is an important resource that helps to cope with difficulties at work, etc. (Vaux 1998). By sharing daily experiences with co-workers, the nurses could not only strengthen their self-esteem but also obtain information about their working rights. During the time of the interview, Cherry did not have any relationship with colleagues who could have provided her with information about possible job openings or upgrading opportunities in the hospital, but she did receive information about a local trade union. By contacting the trade union and seeing its activities, she became better informed about her working rights. As we can see, even if the majority of Cherry's social ties chiefly supported her by means of ethnic bonding and peer support, there were still some social ties in her network that functioned as weak horizontal bridges providing access to useful work-related information.

6.4 Vertical bridging of social ties

Ryan (2011, 2016) in line with Granovetter (1983) has shown that not all social ties function as useful bridges to novel information or other relevant resources, even if weak ties can help to advance the actors' socioeconomic position (Granovetter 1973, 1974). In addition to the strength of the ties, attention should also be paid to the direction of ties and the role of social distance in these ties (Ryan 2011). For example, in Luna's case, she could also benefit from her social relation with her employer, who encouraged her to become an entrepreneur and work independently. In Luna's case, her access to novel information was based on originally weak social ties that became stronger over time, i.e. her employer (strong tie) helped Luna to become connected with her employer's friends. She could profit from the relative social distance between herself and her employer, who in turn provided her with new clients and helped her to become an entrepreneur. In this case, we can talk about the vertical bridging of social ties providing an improved socioeconomic position for Luna.

6.5 The dynamics of transnational resources

In the discussion on migrants' inclusion in their destination society, we should not forget the importance of transnational ties and practices. These can be seen as the glue in the lives of these long-distance migrants, keeping them simultaneously both here and there. Boccagni (2015) states how regular emotional and financial support between the migrants and the family members left behind can strengthen the migrants' dual belonging in the form of transnational identity. By staying in touch with the family members still living in the Philippines, Filipino migrants can maintain and strengthen their ethnic identity. Transnational ties and activities exchanged in the form of remittances and emotional support and caregiving practices between the Filipino migrants and their family members in the Philippines provided an important transnational resource in the lives of the migrants.

Transnational resources do not necessarily impede inclusion but create and strengthen migrants' dual belonging, which is 'pluri-locally distributed, without a clear centre-periphery relation' (Pries 2013: 30). As Cecilia's case showed, remittances sent back home became a way to improve the economic situation of those family members in the Philippines. However, these kinds of social ties based on a moral obligation may change their strength and content as a consequence of life changes either by the migrants or by non-migrants (Saksela-Bergholm 2019). As the vignettes exemplified, in the long run, the relative social distance can change from weak vertical bridging to strong bonding between the migrants and their acquaintances. The same goes for transnational ties, i.e. strong cross-boundary ties can fade away and be replaced by other ties in the case the reciprocal need to stay in touch disappears.

7 Conclusion

Migrant scholars have discussed both the positive and negative effects of social networks and ties for migrants' inclusion to their destination country (Nannestad, Svendsen & Svendsen 2008; Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993). In this article, my intention has been to advance the discussion by exploring the role of social capital in Filipino labour migrants' access to the Finnish labour market and society by exploring their social ties and resources. I have relied on the discussion of social capital mobilisation presented by Anthias (2007) and on analysis of social ties according their function (e.g. vertical or horizontal bridging), strength (weak and strong ties), and their content, such as the role of relative social distance between the actors, by Ryan (2011, 2016). These concepts have their origin in earlier sociological discussion on the forms of capital and social distance (Bourdieu 1986) as well as on the development of types of ties in social relations (Granovetter 1973, 1983).

The majority of the respondents stressed in their answers the importance of staying in contact with other Filipinos. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily mean a lack of interest in Finns or other nationalities, but only the fact that they found their own community easily accessible. The majority of the respondents mention the Church as one of their foremost venues for meeting other co-ethnic members. However, only 11 of the 28 informants belonged to the Catholic Church. The others were members of minority churches. Additionally, the majority were in regular contact with family members left behind, who relied on the regular remittances sent by their relatives in Finland (Saksela-Bergholm 2019). The minority churches play an important role in the lives of several Filipino labour migrants in Finland by providing their members with spiritual and emotional support. However, these kinds of resources cannot be transferred into social capital despite their important social role as empowering and strengthening the migrants' ethnic identity. These resources remain as important supportive resources without a significant meaning for migrants' access to the labour market.

The four vignettes exemplified in this study stressed the role of social distance and the exchange of meaningful resources in the making of social capital. The majority of the respondents had social resources that created and strengthened ethnic bonding between the respondents and the actors in their networks. However, these kinds of ties did not support any mobilisation of social capital because they lacked any socioeconomic meaningful use for the newcomers as the case of Arnel showed. Instead, these ties helped to create ethnic and spiritual bonding between the newly arrived migrants and the other members of Filipino religious communities in the capital area of Helsinki. The dominating role of the minority church can also restrict its members' inclusion to the destination society and mutually provide social support for its members.

Successful mobilisation of social capital took place in cases where the migrants could bridge their vertical and horizontal ties for their socioeconomic advantage. For example, Cecilia managed to move from one country to another, settle down and get a job, thanks to the social capital transmitted through her weak horizontal ties in her religious community. Another useful form of social capital took place as strong vertical bridging in Luna's network, where Luna's previous employer encouraged her to become an entrepreneur and provided her with both information and contacts. However, in Cherry's case, work-related information was transferred through her weak horizontal ties bridging to new ties and information. The transnational ties remained significant emotional resources for the migrants, providing them with affection and loyalty, but at the same time keeping the migrants aware of their moral role as providers of remittances. However, the transnational ties between family members can change over the life course.

Strong ethnic bonding can, in the long run, hinder migrants from accessing the destination society. In the future, local civil society venues, such as mentor-adaptor courses, and work guidance in the form of internship could function as significant bridges together with ethnic associations and churches to help newly arrived migrants adapt to their new society.

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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